

**Former Work First/JET Participant Survey
Winter 2009**

Report of Findings

Submitted to:

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth



Submitted by:

**Moore & Associates, Inc.
21701 West Eleven Mile Road, Suite 9
Southfield, Michigan 48076
(248) 353-1717
Fax: (248) 353-3927
E-mail: moore@jpmoore.net
Website: www.jpmoore.net**

February, 2009

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A survey was conducted by Moore & Associates, Inc., a national research and evaluation firm, on behalf of the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth among former Work First/Family Independence Program recipients and Jobs, Education & Training (JET) Program recipients. This is the fifth year of Moore & Associates, Inc. involvement with this project. The purpose of the survey was to gauge the participants' progress toward self-sufficiency after participation in the program. Three populations were surveyed, as follows:

- Population V:* Consisting of approximately 14,397 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006.
- Population VI:* Consisting of approximately 11,856 former WF/FIP recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007.
- Population VII:* Consisting of approximately 14,559 former WF/FIP and JET recipients whose FIP case closed during the period of October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008.

This project was conducted in previous years. Specifically, Population V and VI have been surveyed in the previous studies. This is the first year of participation for Population VII.

This is a report of the findings from this administration of the survey. Comparisons to the previous two years are made where relevant. Comprehensive data tables for each population, which include frequency of responses, are included under separate cover.

A total of 12,244 surveys were sent on November 17, 2008, with 4,319 sent to Population V, 3,557 to Population VI, and 4,368 to Population VII. The sample was selected randomly from the data provided by the State. A total of 211 surveys were returned as undeliverable, where respondents had moved from their last known address.

Respondents were given the option of mailing the completed survey to the contractor or calling a toll-free telephone number to complete the survey by telephone. In addition, the contractor obtained telephone numbers of non-respondents, where available, and contacted them by telephone to complete the survey. Table 1 depicts the response rates for each of the populations. A total of 1,191 surveys were completed, specifically 261 from Population V, 348 from Population VI, and 582 from Population VII.

Table 1
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009
Response Rates

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	----- # of surveys -----		
Total population	14,397	11,856	14,559
Surveys sent	4,319	3,557	4,368
Total responses	261	348	582
Undeliverable surveys	61	18	133
Delivered surveys	4,258	3,539	4,235
Response rate (deliverable)	6.1%	9.8%	13.7%
Response rate (total)	6.0%	9.8%	12.1%

The questionnaire has remained the same as in previous years. The questionnaire is included in Appendix I of this report.

Respondents were asked to provide information regarding their employment status, job and skills training, health care coverage, other assistance received, and the impact of the Work First/JET program on their lives. Not all respondents answered all questions.

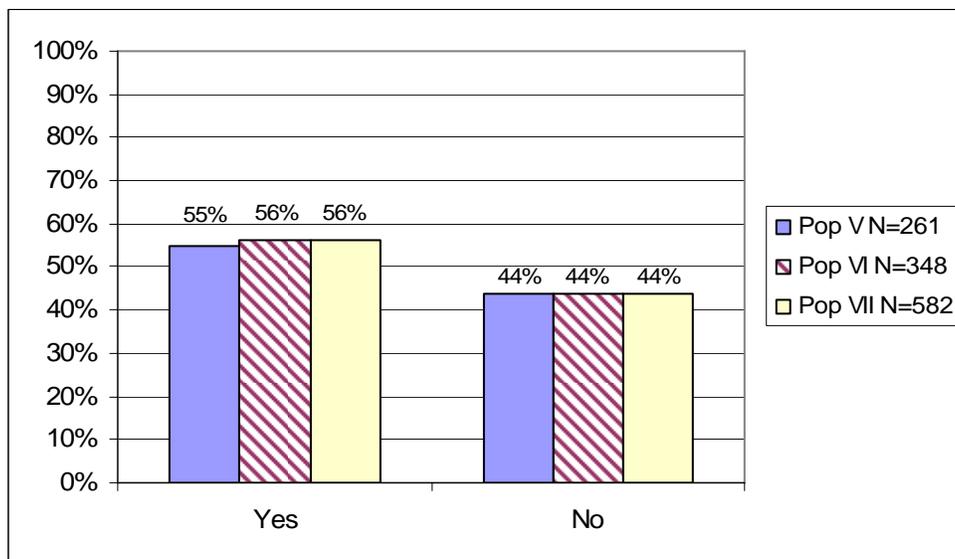
Employment Status

Respondents were asked about their employment status to determine their rate of employment, the types of employment, whether or not they were employed full- or part-time, and reasons for being unemployed. More than half of the former recipients surveyed are currently working (55% of Population V, 56% of Population VI, and 56% of Population VII). The proportions of Populations V and VI respondents currently working are slightly less in the current year as compared to the same populations last year (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

Are You Currently Working?

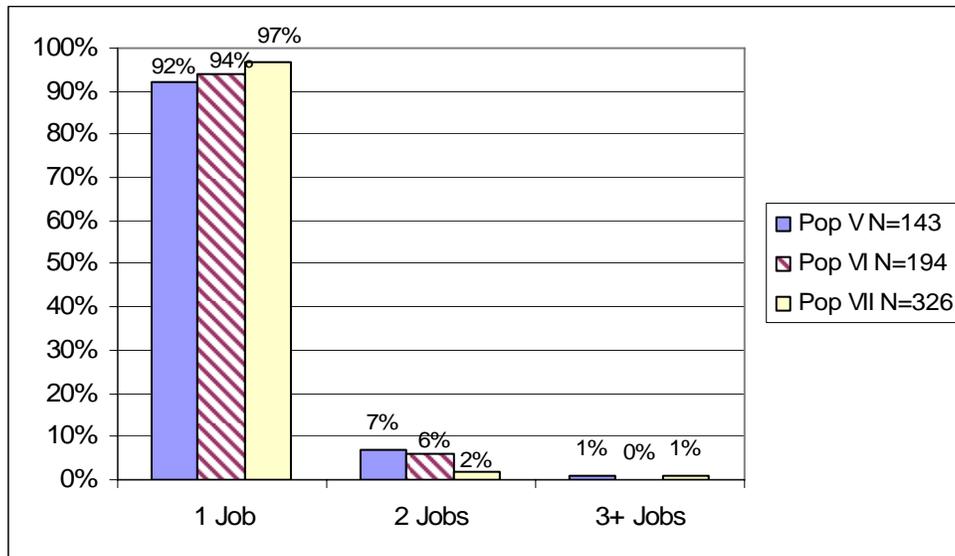


Among those currently working, nine out of ten reported working at one job, while a small proportion reported working more than one job. One to two participants from Populations V and VII reported working three or more jobs. This is similar to last year's results (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

**How Many Jobs Do You Have?
(among those currently working)**



Those who were not currently working reported the last time they held paying jobs. Two-thirds of Population V (66%) and Population VI (68%) respondents reported having worked in the past year. This is a decrease from the 77% overall who indicated this last year. Eight out of ten Population VII respondents reported having worked in the past year. This is a slight increase from last year (Table 2).

Table 2

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

Last Time Held a Paying Job (among those currently unemployed)

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
<u>Last Time Had Paying Job</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)
Job Ended in the Past 12 months	66	68	81
Job Ended 1 to 2 Years Ago	19	23	10
Job Ended 2 to 3 Years Ago	9	4	3
Job Ended More than 3 Years Ago	6	3	4
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>256</i>

Respondents offered various reasons for not working. Similar to last year, the top reason for not working was being unable to find work. This was followed by being laid off from work, being sick or injured, or being fired from the job (Table 3).

Table 3

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

Reasons for Not Working (among those who are currently unemployed)

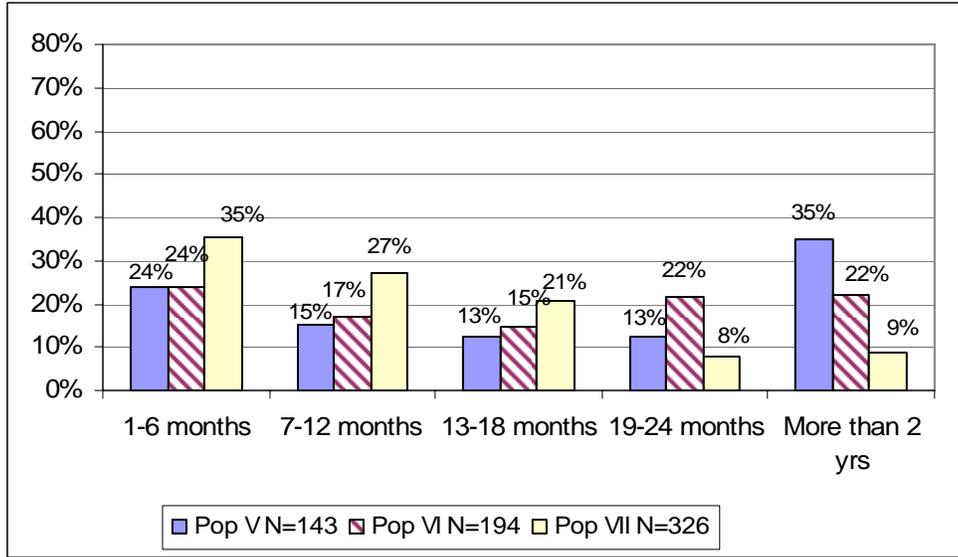
	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
<u>Reasons for not working</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)
I cannot find work	41	44	43
I was sick or injured	22	20	16
I was laid off	23	25	27
I was fired	9	8	17
I cannot find a job that offers enough hours for me to work	8	10	8
I had a new baby	7	9	9
My job was seasonal	7	6	6
I am going to school	8	12	8
I had an illness in the family	7	5	4
Hourly wage too low	4	5	5
I had problems with child care	6	5	5
I moved away from the area	1	2	2
No transportation/no phone	-	1	-
None of the above/other	3	5	1
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>256</i>

Respondents reported how long they had worked for their current or most recent employer. Among those who were currently employed, 39% of Population V respondents, 41% of Population VI respondents, and 62% of Population VII respondents have been in their jobs for a year or less. Among those who were currently unemployed, six out of ten Populations V (62%) and VI (62%) respondents and 71% of Population VII respondents had held their last jobs for a year or less (Exhibit 3).

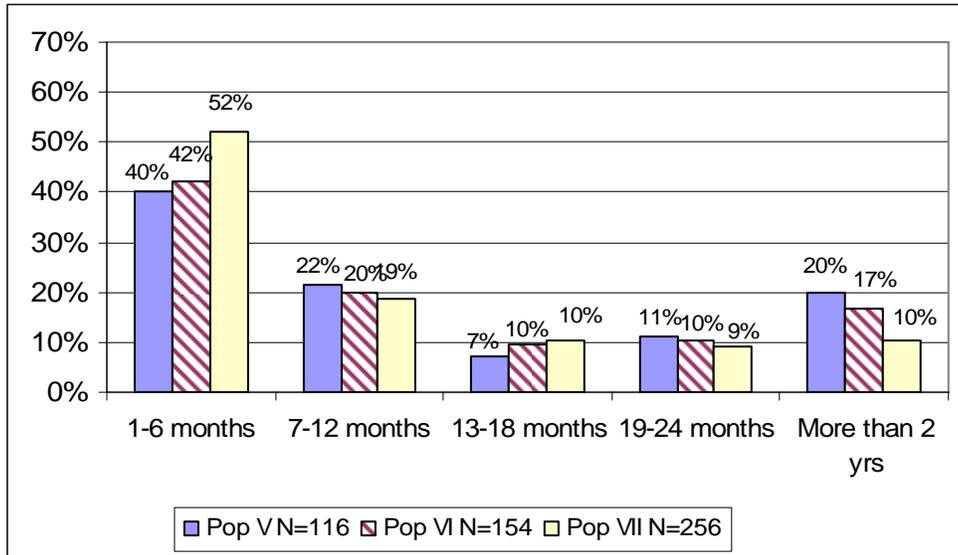
Exhibit 3

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009

How Long Have You Worked For Your Current Employer? (among those currently employed)



How Long Did You Work For Your Most Recent Employer? (among those not currently employed)



On average, among those currently working, respondents worked an average of 30 to 33 hours per week. Those who were unemployed reported working an average of 32 to 35 hours per week in their last jobs (Table 4).

Table 4
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009
Average Number of Hours Per Week Worked

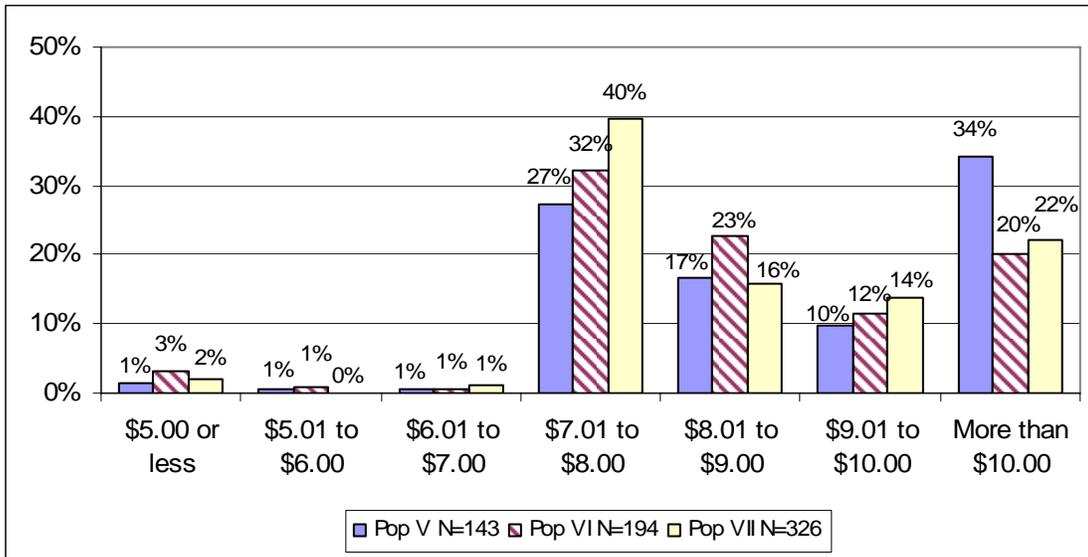
	<u>Population V</u>		<u>Population VI</u>		<u>Population VII</u>	
	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>
	----- average number of hours per week worked -----					
Number of hours	33.3	34.4	30.5	32.5	31.3	34.7
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>143</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>194</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>326</i>	<i>256</i>

Hourly wages were reported for all respondents. Currently employed individuals were asked to indicate their current wage, while those who were unemployed reported their most recent wage. For those who held more than one job, individuals were asked to report their highest wage. One-third (34%) of Population V respondents and 20% each of Populations VI and VII respondents reported making more than \$10.00 per hour. The average regular hourly pay for participants ranged between \$9.09 to \$9.78 per hour. The average minimum pay is slightly higher than the minimum of \$8.75 per hour reported last year, but the average maximum pay remains lower than the reported maximum of \$10.31 per hour last year (Exhibit 4).

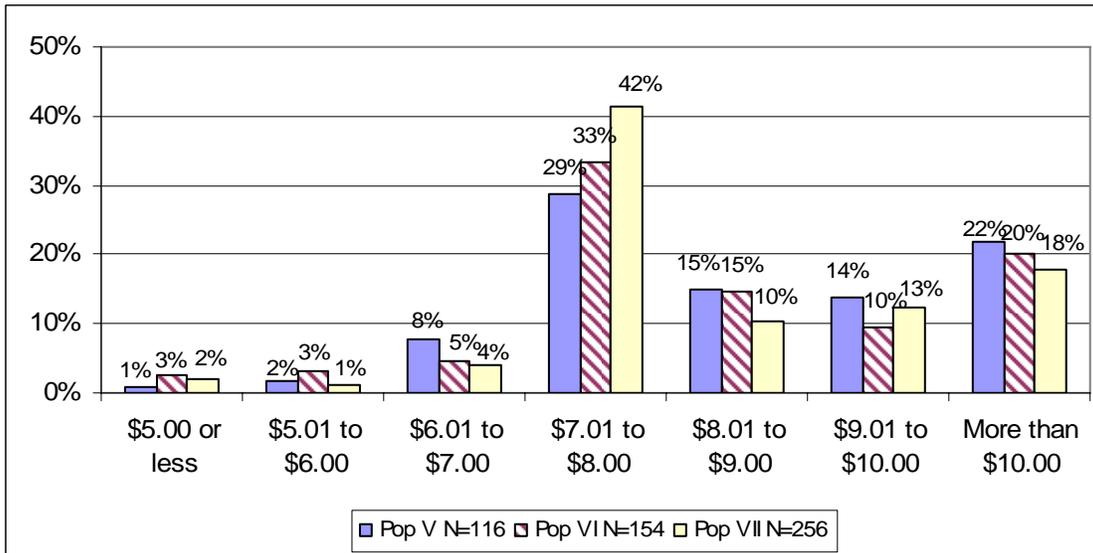
Exhibit 4

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009

What Is Your Regular Hourly Pay? (among those currently employed)



What Was Your Regular Hourly Pay? (among those not currently employed)



Respondents indicated working in various jobs. Similar to previous years, occupations in customer service and health care were mentioned most often (Table 5).

Table 5
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009

Current/Most Recent Job Held

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Cashier/customer service/retail/sales	17	20	19
Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care	13	17	16
Restaurant/food services	9	12	9
Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial	8	6	8
Administrative/support services/clerk	8	5	7
Industrial worker	6	6	6
Supervisor/manager/crew leader	7	5	4
Construction/general labor	5	4	4
Driver/transportation/courier	3	4	2
Skilled trade	3	3	3
Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance	3	2	3
Child care	2	2	3
Automotive repair/automotive care	1	3	2
Education/teacher/training	1	3	2
Stock/inventory	3	1	2
Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging	2	2	2
Technical	2	1	1
Grounds work/agriculture/ranger	2	1	1
Security guard/prison guard/corrections	*	1	1
Maintenance	1	*	1
Social work	1	-	1
Cosmetology	*	-	-
Pet groomer/animal care	-	-	*
Temporary services	-	-	*
Homemaker/chore services	-	-	*
Job coach/employment consulting	-	-	*
Military	*	-	*
<i>Number responding</i>	261	348	582

* Less than one-half of one percent

Approximately one-fourth of respondents reported working for other employers during the past year. Among those currently working, two out of ten respondents from Populations V and Population VI and approximately one-third of Population VII indicated they had worked for other employers during the year. This is slightly lower than the previous year (Table 6).

Table 6
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009
Worked for Other Employers During the Past Year

	<u>Population V</u>		<u>Population VI</u>		<u>Population VII</u>	
	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Currently Working</u>	<u>Not Working</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Yes	21	15	21	20	30	30
No	73	85	74	78	63	68
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>143</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>194</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>326</i>	<i>256</i>

Respondents, who indicated having worked for other employers during the past year, described their jobs. Similar to the respondents' current jobs, health care, customer service, and food service occupations were mentioned most often. There also were frequent mentions of support service, cleaning service, and stock/inventory occupations this year (Table 7).

Table 7

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

**Other Jobs Held During the Past Year
(among those who worked for other employers during the past year)**

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Healthcare/medical/nursing home/care giver/adult care	17	23	15
Cashier/customer service/retail/sales	21	21	24
Restaurant/food services	9	21	17
Administrative/support services/clerk	15	6	9
Driver/transportation/courier	2	4	2
Cleaning services/housekeeping/janitorial	9	7	10
Industrial worker	4	9	7
Stock/inventory	13	1	2
Supervisor/manager/crew leader	2	-	5
Education/teacher/training	-	4	2
Construction/general labor	-	-	5
Child care	4	1	2
Automotive repair/automotive care	4	-	1
Warehouse/shipping/receiving/packaging	2	3	1
Grounds work/agriculture/ranger	2	3	1
Homemaker/chore services	2	1	2
Skilled trade	2	1	-
Security guard/prison guard/corrections	2	-	2
Technical	-	1	-
Accounting/auditing/bookkeeping/payroll/insurance	2	-	2
Maintenance	-	-	1
Advertising/marketing/public relations	-	-	1
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>175</i>

** Less than one-half of one percent*

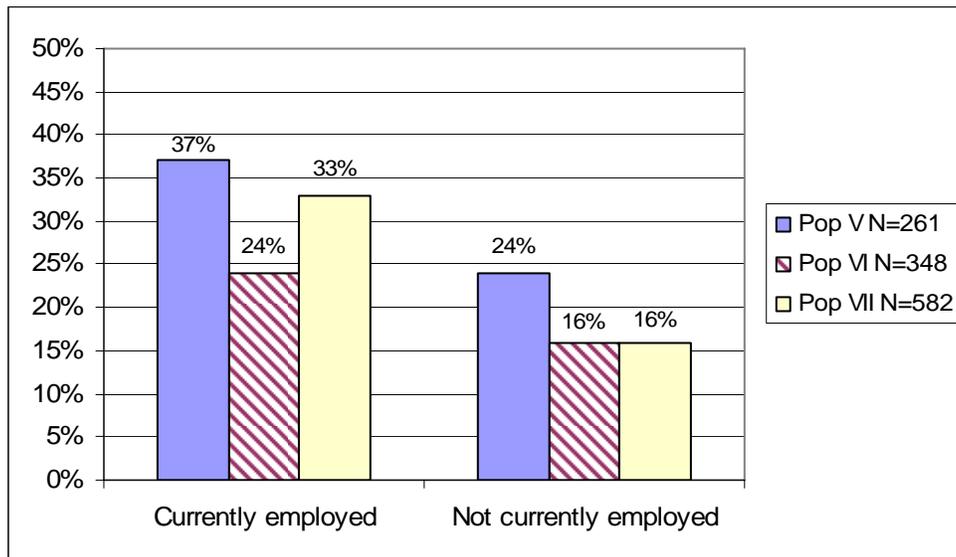
Job and Skills Training

Respondents were asked if their current or most recent employer provided training programs to update their skills. Approximately one-third currently employed participants from Populations V (37%) and VII (33%) and 24% from Population VI indicated their employers offered training programs. This is similar to the results reported last year of the currently employed respondents who indicated training was offered (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009

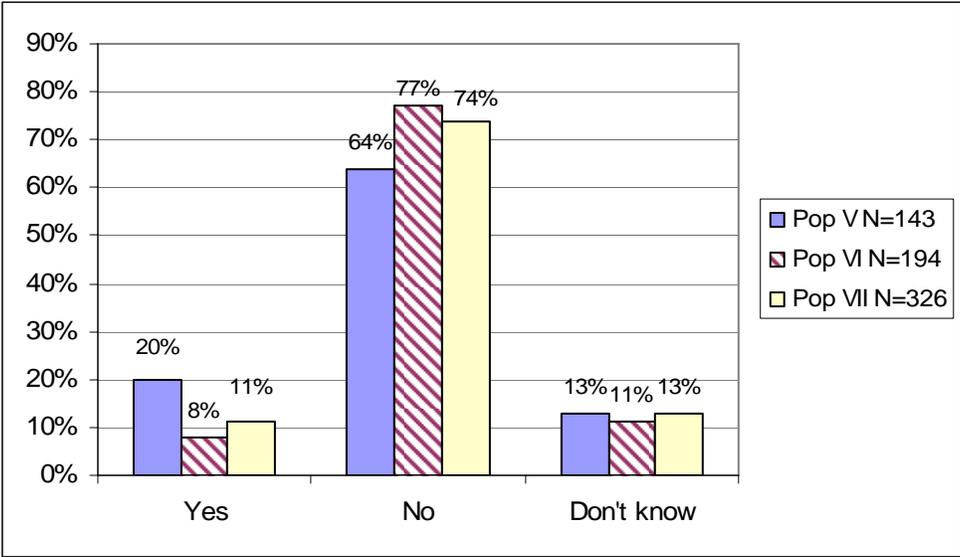
Employer Provides Training Programs



Among those currently employed and indicating their employer offered training, 32% of Population V participants, 28% of Population VI participants, and 36% of Population VII participants are currently participating in a training program sponsored by their employer. When compared to last year, it appears a similar proportion of participants from Population V are taking advantage of the training programs, while a much lower proportion of Population VI participants are involved in training programs offered by their employers.

Currently employed respondents answered questions regarding tuition reimbursement. Among those currently employed, two out of ten (20%) for Population V, 8% of Population VI recipients, and 11% of Population VII recipients indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement for courses to improve job skills. This is slightly lower than last year's results (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009
Employer Provides Tuition Reimbursement
(among those currently employed)



Among those who indicated their employers offered tuition reimbursement, 11% of Population V participants, 13% of Population VI participants, and 16% of Population VII participants took advantage of this benefit and were taking courses. Compared to last year, it appears more Population VI participants are taking advantage of these additional benefits, while only a few more Population V participants are accessing these benefits.

All respondents were asked about the types of training programs they have participated in since leaving the Work First Program. More than half indicated they had not participated in any training since leaving the program. Approximately three out of ten respondents reported on-the-job training. These results are comparable to those from previous years (Table 8).

Table 8

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

Types of Training Programs Participated In Since Leaving Work First

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
On-the job training	28	34	29
Off-site training	7	8	10
Computer training	9	7	7
Help with reading or math	3	1	2
Tuition reimbursement	2	1	2
None	57	52	61
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>261</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>582</i>

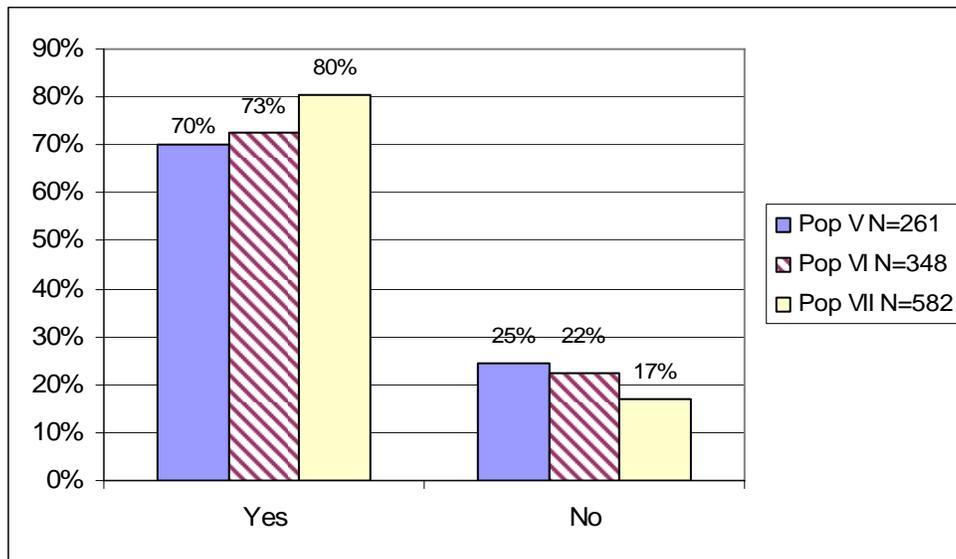
Health Care Coverage

Respondents discussed their health care coverage. Similar to the results from last year, approximately three-fourths of the respondents have health insurance coverage through some source (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009

Do You Have Health Insurance Coverage?



Health care coverage was provided through various sources, including employers, other health programs, or spouses' employers. More than half indicated they had health insurance through another state or county program, similar to last year. Eighteen percent of Population V respondents, 10% of Population VI, and 8% of Population VII respondents indicated having health insurance through their employer. Approximately one-fourth of Populations V and VI individuals and 17% of Population VII indicated they did not have health care coverage (Table 9).

Table 9
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009
Source of Health Care Coverage

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Have health insurance through another state or county program	49	60	71
Have health insurance through my employer	18	10	8
Have health insurance through my spouses' employer	3	2	1
Have no health insurance at all	25	22	17
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>261</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>582</i>

Among those currently working, 62% of Population V, 39% of Population VI, and 42% of Population VII respondents reported their current employers offer health insurance. This is an increase in the proportion of employers offering health insurance for Population V, but a decline for Population VI compared to previous years. Nearly four out of ten (39%) reported their employer pays for part of the monthly cost, while one-third indicated their employer did not cover any of the monthly cost. Only six percent overall of those whose employer offered health insurance indicated their employer covered all health insurance costs. Interestingly, two out of ten respondents reported not knowing what their employer covered in terms of health insurance costs. Compared to last year, there is a slight increase (45% overall in the current year compared to 41% last year) in the proportion of employers paying for some or all health insurance costs (Table 10).

Table 10

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

Employer Offers Health Insurance

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Current Employer Offers Health Insurance	62	39	42
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>143</i>	<i>194</i>	<i>326</i>
<u>Employer Pays For:</u>			
All of the monthly cost	10	5	4
Part of the monthly cost	42	36	38
None of the monthly cost	26	39	33
Don't know	21	19	25
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>138</i>

Similar to the past two years, nearly all of the respondents, 90% of Population V respondents, 95% of Population VI respondents, and 96% of Population VII respondents, have children living at home. Approximately half indicated they had children who attended elementary school (Table 11).

Table 11

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

Children Living At Home (among those with children)

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Children Living At Home	90	95	96
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>261</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>582</i>
<u>Children Attend (among those with children)</u>			
Childcare	17	20	24
Pre-school	11	6	8
Head Start	9	9	10
Elementary school	52	49	46
Middle school	25	25	21
High school	28	27	26
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>236</i>	<i>331</i>	<i>560</i>

Participants with children were asked about health care coverage for their children. Approximately seven out of ten respondents from Population V (69%) and three-fourths of Population VI (75%) and Population VII (78%) respondents reported their children were covered through the Healthy Kids program or Medicaid, similar to last year’s responses (Table 12).

Table 12
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009

Types of Health Insurance Children Have (among those with children)

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Healthy Kids/Medicaid	69	75	78
MiChild	15	16	18
Through my/my spouse’s employer	14	9	6
No health insurance	6	4	4
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>236</i>	<i>331</i>	<i>560</i>

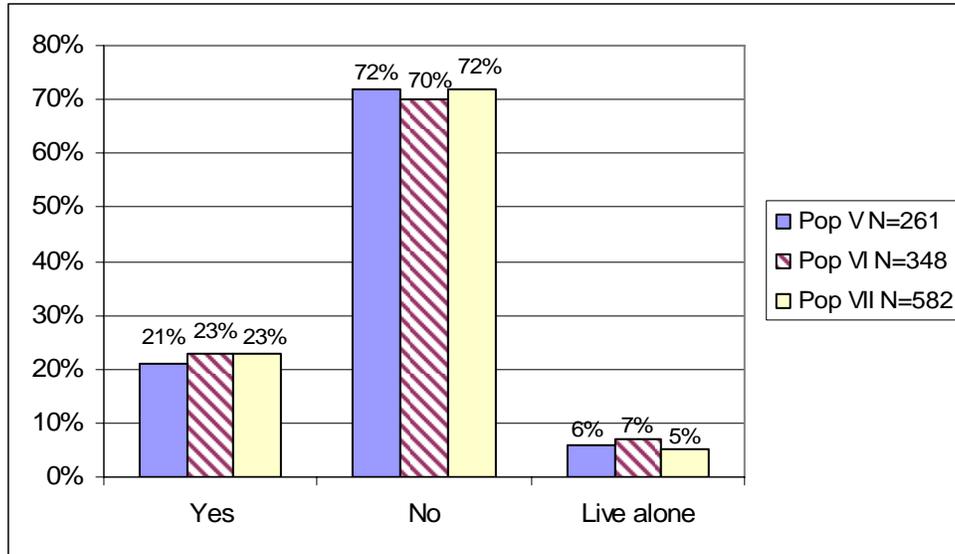
Other Assistance

Respondents were asked about their households and whether or not they received assistance through other sources. When asked if someone else in their household held a paying job, over two out of ten reported “yes”. Specifically, 21% of Population V, 23% of Population VI, and 23% of Population VII indicated this (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8

Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009

Does Anyone Else In Your Household Have a Paying Job?



Over two-thirds overall reported they or someone else in their household receives public assistance, welfare payments, food stamps, vouchers, SSI, or emergency help from FIA or other government agencies (64% of Population V, 71% of Population VI, and 72% of Population VII). On average, respondents reported receiving approximately \$390 in welfare payments, almost \$341 in food stamps, and approximately \$570 in SSI payments in the last month. The average dollar amount of outside assistance received by participants for welfare payments and food stamps have increased compared to last year, while SSI payments are slightly lower (Table 13).

Table 13

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

How Much \$\$ Assistance Received from Other Source During the Last Month

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Welfare Payments</u>			
\$1 to \$200	2	2	8
\$201 to \$300	2	2	3
\$301 to \$400	2	2	3
\$401 to \$500	5	6	8
Over \$500	2	3	4
No answer/do not receive	86	85	74
Average welfare payment \$\$	\$433.70	\$396.40	\$340.20
<u>Food Stamps</u>			
\$1 to \$100	7	8	8
\$101 to \$200	12	10	14
\$201 to \$300	23	22	19
\$301 to \$400	18	23	14
\$401 to \$500	14	13	19
Over \$500	16	14	11
No answer/do not receive	11	8	8
Average food stamp \$\$	\$345.90	\$341.80	\$335.30
<u>SSI Payments</u>			
\$1 to \$200	1	*	1
\$201 to \$300	-	*	1
\$301 to \$400	-	*	1
\$401 to \$500	2	1	1
\$501 to \$600	2	2	1
Over \$600	6	4	6
No answer/do not receive	89	91	89
Average SSI payment \$\$	\$558.10	\$561.00	\$587.30
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>168</i>	<i>246</i>	<i>416</i>

* Less than one-half of one percent.

Respondents were asked to recall if in the past 12 months there was ever a time when they were not able to pay their mortgage, rent, or utility bills. Approximately seven out of ten respondents from Population V (75%), Population VI (69%), and Population VII (72%) reported there had been a time during the past year in which they were unable to pay these bills. Respondents who indicated they had difficulty paying their mortgage, rent, or utility bills reported not being able to pay an average of four

mortgage, rent, or utility payments during the year. The number of respondents indicating an inability to pay their bills in the past 12 months has increased compared to previous years. In addition, the average number of times respondents were unable to pay during the year was slightly increased compared to previous years' results (Table 14).

Table 14
Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009

Could Not Pay At Least One Mortgage, Rent, or Utility Payment During the Last 12 Months

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Could Not Pay a Mortgage Payment During the Past 12 Months	75	69	72
<u>Among those who could not pay:</u>			
Average number of times could not pay mortgage payment over the past 12 months	4.3 times	4.0 times	4.5 times
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>196</i>	<i>241</i>	<i>418</i>

Impact of the Work First Program

Respondents were asked in general how they felt regarding where they were in terms of their household income, their housing condition, their food and nutrition, and their health insurance since not receiving assistance. Respondents most often felt the program left them better off in the area of household income, with approximately four out of ten individuals from Population V (39%) and Population VII (42%) and one-third from Population VI (33%) indicating they were either “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of their income. Three out of ten felt they were better off in terms of their housing conditions and food and nutrition. Approximately three out of ten respondents indicated feeling “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of health care for their children while one-fourth indicated feeling “a little” or “a lot” better off in terms of their access to health insurance. Comparing

the areas of household income, housing condition, food and nutrition, healthcare for children, and access to health insurance (Table 15).

Table 15

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

Do You Feel Better Off, the Same, or Worse Off Than When Received Assistance?

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Household Income</u>			
A lot/a little better off	39	33	42
The same	22	30	25
A lot/a little worse off	34	34	28
<u>Housing Condition</u>			
A lot/a little better off	31	24	30
The same	47	57	47
A lot/a little worse off	18	17	17
<u>Food and Nutrition</u>			
A lot/a little better off	35	30	30
The same	40	52	43
A lot/a little worse off	21	16	22
<u>Health Care for Child(ren)</u>			
A lot/a little better off	31	33	30
The same	52	57	57
A lot/a little worse off	10	7	8
<u>Access to health insurance coverage</u>			
A lot/a little better off	26	26	26
The same	46	52	48
A lot/a little worse off	23	19	20
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>261</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>582</i>

When asked about the benefits of being in Work First, approximately four out of ten Population V (44%), Population VI (44%), and Population VII (42%) respondents indicated Work First helped them to find a job. This is similar to results from previous studies. Thirty-six percent of Population V

program helped improve their job skills. In the current year, the overall proportion of participants who indicated the program helped to improve job skills is slightly higher than last year (Table 16).

Table 16

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

Did Being in Work First Help You With . . . ?

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Finding a job	44	44	42
Improving job skills	36	33	32
Keeping a job	17	15	18
Getting a higher paying job	13	6	10
None	20	20	19
No answer	16	16	18
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>261</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>582</i>

Respondents were asked if Work First helped their family with various money management, health management, and housing issues. Comparable to previous years, help with money management issues (budgeting and paying bills on time) was mentioned most often (Table 17).

Table 17

**Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
Former Work First/JET Participant Survey – Winter 2009**

Did Being in Work First Help Your Family With . . . ?

	<u>Population V</u>	<u>Population VI</u>	<u>Population VII</u>
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Money management and budgeting	22	23	24
Getting health insurance	17	13	15
Paying your bills on time	14	15	18
Getting better health care	10	6	8
Getting better dental care	7	5	5
Getting better housing	7	4	8
None	33	29	19
No answer	27	33	41
<i>Number responding</i>	<i>261</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>582</i>

Respondents made comments regarding their experience with the Work First Program. A similar number of positive and negative comments were made. Respondents who made positive comments appreciated the assistance the program offered. Comparable to comments made in the past, they remarked on the helpfulness of the staff and the benefits of the services provided by the program. Respondents who made negative comments felt the program did not assist them in finding employment. Some of these individuals felt staff was not very supportive. Others commented on the great amount of paperwork and bureaucracy involved in participating in the program. These negative remarks were similar to those made previously. Following is a sample of some of the respondents' comments:

Positive Comments

Work First helped with gas transportation to find a job.

I think if you are in this program and want to exceed it is great. They helped me a great deal I loved my workers and if you use the program and not take advantage of the program, then you will benefit from this program.

Work First is a necessary program for better us to get better jobs, training and computer access.

I thought this program helped in many ways but it also help me feel better about my self that also improved my out look, so I could look for jobs.

It helped me get a job and car.

I think it is a good place to be to get help with finding a job and how to dress for interviews.

Work First gives you a push in the right direction.

It was a good program for me. It helped me out in the long run to be a stronger person for family and myself.

The people that helped me at the Clinton Twp, MI office were wonderful! The manager, Don, really puts his heart into his job.

Work First has helped me mostly in preparing a resume and techniques on interviewing and people interactions.

A very helpful program to individuals and their families with any management skills that need to be improved.

I really want to thank everyone that I work with in the past. They have helped me and I didn't have to come down to see, they just helped me get a job.

It's a great program! It really helped me update my resume and motivated and encouraged me to find a job. Thanks!

I liked the classes that helped you to better your resume and computer training as well.

I enjoyed my time at Work First and if used correctly, it is a wonderful tool in becoming self-sufficient.

Work First was a blessing it was the "hand up" I needed to get on my feet again and get my life back. Thank you so much!

Work First was very helpful on helping me find and keep a job. I'm glad we have a place like Work First in our community to help others.

The program helped you with your resume and helps you find a job and put your information on the website.

Gets you motivated makes you feel like a real person making a paycheck even if it was \$20.00 you count on it. Thank you

Work First did help me a lot find a good job; also they helped me out with a lot of the things for my family. Work First/JET has the right idea but Michigan needs a site where people can work and get on the job training at the same time for money to help get there self pride back.

The workshops were a big help.

I was really thankful for the program. Thank you

I think it is a great program. Work First employees helped me make the decision with enthusiastic encouragement to go back to school for a higher education at Davenport University.

I was living on welfare for many years. Going to Work First helped me get a job and keep it. I've had the same job for almost 3 years and started a second job that I've for 2 years. I feel better as a person, knowing I'm working for a living. Thanks!

It is a great program with very helpful employers. I believe this program is great for serious people who are determined to do better for themselves.

Work First is a good program if participants utilize the opportunity to their advantage, and if they are truly there to get ahead.

They showed me how to do a good resume and interview, using their internet helped with me find a job.

The clothing vouchers, gas reimbursement, car insurance and repairs are excellent. I could not have gotten a job without them.

It is a wonderful program for low-income single mom's case managers are always there to help you understand what they can help you with and who can help you if they cannot!

I believe that Work First is a good program. I received a lot of resourceful information.

It helped me learn things about getting and preparing for a job, my math skills and GED Prep.

This was one of best times in my life. The staff at NFI Jet was wonderful, caring, And helpful in my journey on the road to a better life for my son and I.

Thanks for all your help I'm now attending college also while working full-time.

My worker was very helpful and caring. The opportunity that was given to me was great and greatly appreciated.

Work First was also a great place to network with people trying to better themselves and their families. People in the same boat that you're trying to paddle in. I used to get help with transportation to work.

They helped when I needed tires and help with 3months car insurance.

The program was encouraging to find a job. There was access to so many resources.

The staff is awesome in Bay City.

They put me through a healthcare program that allows me to get a better job, now I 'm starting college for LPN.

I think it's an "AWESOME" program helps people with a lot more then just a job!!

Negative Comments

Work First really didn't help with getting a job when there isn't any in my field.

They need to change some of their seminars- "Job Burn Out".

That it is a waste of money; the program helped me with nothing. I have 2 degrees. I know how to read, and I understand what it takes to get and retain a job. I learned nothing in the MI Works program.

A waste of time sitting in class and not looking for work, I believe it works against you.

Work First doesn't really help the people who need help. They help people who do not want to get off welfare.

I've been in and out of the Work First program 3 times in the past 5 years and feel I am no more ahead in anything, as if I never attended the program. I didn't think the program was ever helpful to me.

Work First staff makes you feel worthless, and childlike by the way they treat you. As if you're not an adult.

The program needs caring people who will listen.

Looking for work 40 hours a week is impossible. I live in a small town and do not have a driver's license, and was never offered any education to help in my job skills. (This state does nothing to help!!

They encourage you to take any job offered and minimum wage jobs cannot pay enough for daycare and low- income housing gets raised and you end up working for nothing.

If there are no jobs, how are we supposed to get one? I feel it's just a class. I don't feel they try hard enough to help us find jobs.

It didn't benefit me. I don't make much money and now I have to pay \$200 on my health care.

Work First didn't help me- training and skills were far below my skill level (too remedial) and there are no good paying jobs in the area. (50mile radius)

No access to health coverage and they were unable to help with education because I already have an ABA and in my field you need a BA.

They made you take the first job that came along no matter what it paid or how much you hate it.

It was a waste of time of my time and money. They were supposed to reimburse me for gas and never did. Cost me an extra \$60 a week for gas!

I only received \$ 11 cash and had to go to Work First twice a month honestly, it was a waste of my time and gas and daycare costs.

Very rude!!

I have a Bachelors in the science of Business Administration and was given hardly any encouragement and sub-level help for my education.

I did not like the way that Work First generalized everyone. You have nothing in place for (women) that have an educational background and already have the basic skills that you are teaching.

Work First should have a program for felons to find employment that can help them move forward in their lives.

Work First never helped me. The only thing they did was criticizing me, and talked to me anyway. I was working a job over 90 days I went to them to get my car fixed; they told me I didn't qualify. I am afraid to apply for cash assistance as bad as I need it. I just don't want to be in the same boat, from my last experience.

They treat you like you're less of a person. They are very rude and I will try very hard not to return so I can keep my dignity.

I never found as a job through them. I found one on my own and now we make too much money for any assistance but still fall under poverty level???

The program forces you to take a dead end low paying job or face penalties. Real career training is necessary to succeed in a 1-parent family.

I repeatedly asked for help from Work First for education so I could find a job that would help me earn more and was given no help at all. Finding people minimum wage jobs doesn't help them! If Work First wants to help, better paying jobs need to be a priority. I lost very important health care when I took a job and couldn't afford to see a doctor.

This program is absolutely ridiculous. 55hours a week for job search is not feasible for a couple with no car and 3 children. Get this program together!! The people in Lansing that make these policies are completely blind to what can be done and not done.

I feel that Work First needs to take in consideration when there is a disabled person and a small child at home and the hours you expect a person to work.

My experience at Work First was not a good one. They were snotty and treat you like you're stupid. Sometimes they are rude.

I think Work First is a waste of time because they have you doing that job search and everybody is out signing up for the same jobs, coaches don't have a lot of job leads.

I think they have to high of requirements with the 40hour/week job search. After the first couple of weeks you run out of places to apply.

I think Work First is a waste of time. They are no jobs out there believe me I don't want to live off the state but they said we are making too much money for food stamps we are starving.

I felt that the program and the workers discriminated against me due to my higher education and were unable to help me in anyway.

It took time away from searching for a job and I was not reimbursed as promised in contract for mileage. I felt put down from staff. I have a college education. I'm not stupid as they treated me.

I participated in Work First and got no cash assistance so I feel the program is a joke and complete waste of time and money I don't have.

The instructor seemed much more involved with her own portfolio than being any help to someone else.

If person has never had a job, it's a good program. But for those of us who have had jobs, it's pretty much a waste of time, because we already know how to look for a job, and we could be looking for one instead of sitting in a class all day, while the instructor is not even there.

I was not offered any help with spelling, math or computer skills, in which I need a lot of help.

It's a waste of time. I would have employment now if I had a car.

As far as Work First helping me find a job it made me fill out applications for fear of losing my case, but none of the jobs that came from Work First ever paid out.

The Work First Survey was conducted to gauge participants' progress toward self-sufficiency after participation in the program. The survey was conducted during the winter of 2009 by Moore & Associates, Inc., a national research and evaluation company. Surveys were mailed to participants and they were given the opportunity to respond via mail or by telephone.

In the current year, more than half of the former respondents are currently employed. A majority of these individuals are working at one job. These respondents reported working an average of 32 to 35 hours per week. Their average minimum pay of \$9.09 per hour reported for the current year is slightly higher than the minimum of \$8.75 per hour reported last year, but the average maximum pay reported for the current year of \$9.78 per hour remains lower than the reported maximum of \$10.31 per hour from last year. Health care, customer service, and food service occupations were mentioned most often. Among those currently not employed, approximately two-thirds of Populations V (66%) and VI (68%) respondents and eight out of ten Population VII (81%) respondents indicated they had worked in the past year. The top reason for being unemployed was not being able to find work.

Approximately one-third of Populations V (37%) and VII (33%) and 24% of Population VI participants indicated their current employers offered training programs and two out of ten Population V (20%), 8% for Population VI, and 11% for Population VII recipients indicated their employer offered tuition reimbursement. There appears to be a slight decrease in the current year when comparing to the previous years of participants taking advantage of these employer offered benefits.

In terms of health care coverage, more individuals in the current year reported receiving health insurance through an outside program rather than through their employer or spouse's employer. Employers appear to be somewhat more likely than in previous years to offer health insurance

coverage. Also, compared to last year, employers are slightly more likely to help pay for either all or part of the health insurance.

Similar to previous years, over two-thirds of respondents reported they received outside assistance from other organizations and agencies. The dollar amount of the assistance received is similar to that received last year for welfare payments and food stamps, while SSI payments are slightly lower.

When asked about the impact of the Work First Program, respondents were most likely to indicate they were better off as a result of the program in the areas of household income, followed by food and nutrition, and health care for children. However, access to health insurance coverage continues to be an issue with many, along with the issue of housing conditions.

Overall, respondents who felt the program was beneficial indicated they appreciated the helpful staff and the services provided. Respondents who were not enamored of the program did not feel the program assisted them in finding employment. They did not find staff very supportive and complained about the amount of paperwork involved to participate.

Questionnaire